

DASAF Corner

From the Director of Army Safety

On the Edge ... OWN the Edge!

Our Army continues to fight the Global War on Terrorism, with our Soldiers fighting two active campaigns against a determined enemy. More and more of our Active and Reserve Component forces are returning home hardened combat veterans. They've been "*on the edge*" in Iraq and Afghanistan and see themselves as combatants in every aspect of their lives.

This mindset has become clear to me as I've traveled and talked to Soldiers, NCOs, and officers. They don't want to be viewed as the "geeky guy on a moped who is decked out in safety gear." They are warriors. This mindset presents a unique challenge to leaders who are trying to manage risk. As leaders, we want to capture the energy and intensity that comes with being on the edge and channel it in a more constructive way. This enables war fighters to manage risk and operate in a deliberate manner so they "*own the edge*."

The Combat Readiness Center continues to serve as the knowledge center for all losses, helping commanders connect the dots on loss prevention and providing leaders with tools to manage risk. We know Soldiers are on the edge, but we want them to *own* the edge through Composite Risk Management (CRM).

As we start a new year, our Army is launching a new campaign to get the CRM message down to first-line supervisors and individual Soldiers. CRM enables every Soldier to own the edge, no matter where they are in the fight. CRM teaches Soldiers *how* to think—not what to think—and challenges them to be smart about managing risk. This concept puts individual Soldiers and leaders in control of how far on the edge they can operate.

When a Soldier wakes up each day—whether in combat, training, or off-duty—we want him to ask himself one simple question: “What could take me out of the fight today?” If you are fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan, it could be the enemy. However, if you are driving home on a 4-day weekend, it could be fatigue, speed, or alcohol. Even in combat, it’s more likely you’ll be taken out of the fight by an accidental hazard than by the enemy. No matter the threat, the most effective way to counter risk is CRM.

Once Soldiers internalize CRM, they begin making smart risk decisions wherever they are—be it in theater, in garrison, at home, or on the road. Safety transcends from nothing more than a separate paragraph in an operations order or an afterthought during mission planning to something instinctive and intuitive. With CRM, Soldiers become more lethal and ready so they’re not just on the edge, they OWN THE EDGE!

Joe Smith